



Grace Hunt and her family visited Washington, D.C. where she was honored as the Second District's winner of the Congressional Art Competition. Her winning entry "Cousins" currently hangs in the U.S. Capitol Building.

Student Artist Honored

A painting by **Grace Hunt**, a 2004 graduate of Crisp Academy, is now on display at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC.

Her entry is the Second District winner in the 2004 Congressional Arts Competition, sponsored by members of the U.S. House in an effort to help promote art education and encourage young people to develop their talent. The contest is held yearly and is open to area students.

This year's runners up were: **Carrie Skalla** from Deerfield Windsor School and **Micki Williams** of Deerfield Windsor came in third. Artwork by Grace Hunt, **Jessica Thompson** from Albany High School and **Spencer Duncan Young** of Tift Co. High School received honorable mentions. For information on entering next year's contest, contact one of my offices.

Appropriations

(continued from page 2)

- \$45,000 - City of Shellman, GA - Police communications and security equipment
- \$100,000- Baker County, GA - 911 communication system
- \$350,000 – Moultrie - Technical improvement grants/police

INTERIOR: \$775,000

- \$150,000 - Albany Theater - Restoration and repair
- \$125,000 - Stewart County, GA - Courthouse - Restoration of national historic site
- \$500,000 - GA Streambank Restoration

AGRICULTURE: \$8,057,000

- \$1,000,000 - Children's Nutritional Research Center/Peanut Institute-Study of overweight children; alternative uses of peanuts in diet
- \$625,000 - Poultry-Agriculture-UGA-Gamebird and wildlife restoration
- \$3,600,000 - GA Water Soil & Water Conservation Commission-Water Conservation
- \$200,000 - SE Fruit Tree/Nut – Byron, GA
- \$350,000 - UGA-Community Nutrient Management)
- \$898,000 - UGA-Water Policy Research
- \$500,000 - UGA-Cotton Fiber Quality Research
- \$100,000 – Pecan Scab – Byron, GA
- \$50,000 – Poultry Enteritis Mortality Syndrome
- \$474,000 Water Use Efficiency and Quality UGA
- \$260,000 – Agriculture Water Usage

ENERGY AND WATER: \$8,471,000

- \$250,000 -Flint River Environmental Impact Study
- \$5,221,000 - Chattahoochee and Flint River revitalization

DEFENSE: \$185,660,000

- \$1,000,000- MCLB - Albany-Sewer Line Replacement
- \$121,590,000 -MCLB - Albany-Marine Amphibious Assault Vehicles
- \$2,400,000 - Muscogee Co-Army Logistics-Dimensions Int'l.
- \$2,000,000 -Ft. Benning-Ammunition Route
- \$58,670,000 -Sumter Co-Defense-Lockheed-Wind Corrected Munitions Dispenser

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION: \$ 114,277,000

- \$9,600,000 - Moody AFB-Base Support Center
- \$49,565,000 - Ft. Benning-Barracks Replacement
- \$3,850,000 - Ft. Benning-Hazardous Cargo Loading Facility-
- \$18,362,000 - Ft. Benning-Physical Fitness Complex

Social Security

(continued from page 1)

continue benefits at the current rate until 2021 rather than 2041.

Proponents of the plan argue that they will find additional money to put into the trust funds so that current beneficiaries can continue to count on their monthly checks, however I have yet to see how this can be achieved without adding billions to the already skyrocketing budget deficit.

As members of Congress we need to examine Social Security and look for ways to improve the system and ensure that it will take care of our retirees for many years to come. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to see this happen, however I believe that we must first acknowledge that the system we have today works and Americans can not afford for us to put it in jeopardy.

Homeland Security

(continued from page 1)

exit system known as "US Visit," as well as funding for the Coast Guard and anti-missile technologies for commercial aircraft.

Congress also passed the \$8.2 billion Coast Guard Reauthorization. This includes \$1.1 billion to replace antiquated ships and aircraft, as well as extended training bonuses and increases to the Coast Guard's law enforcement authority to carry firearms, make arrests and seize vessels whose owners fail to comply with judgments for maritime security law violations.

While there is still much that needs to be done, rest assured that in the years ahead we will continue fighting to keep Americans safe and secure.

Constituent Service

Working for the People of Georgia's Second Congressional District

My most important job as a Member of Congress is serving my constituents. Whether we are helping our young people start their military career at one of the U.S. Service Academies, making plans for your family to tour the U.S. Capitol or assisting you in your federal grant or appropriation application, my staff members and I are always pleased to assist you. We are able to secure U.S. Flags that have been flown over the U.S. Capitol; we can help speed up your application for a passport and each of my offices offers internships to give students a hands-on opportunity to learn about their government.

Additionally we are happy to assist you with questions or problems that you might be encountering with the federal government.

While we are unable to order federal agencies to decide a matter in your favor, we are often successful in getting you a prompt response. Here are some areas where we might be able to help:

- **Social Security and Medicare Benefits**
- **Student Loans**
- **Veterans Benefits and Military Service**
- **Disaster Assistance**
- **Small Business Loan Applications**
- **Immigration, Naturalization and Citizenship**
- **FHA, VA and RHS Home Loan Applications**
- **IRS problems**

Contact Congressman Sanford Bishop...www.house.gov/bishop

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Congressman
Sanford Bishop
Reports

2nd Congressional District, Georgia

2429 Rayburn HOB, Washington, DC 20515

Winter 2005

Dear Friends,

Over the past year in Washington, DC, Congress has addressed issues of health care, homeland security, education, crime and foreign policy, but as we move into the 109th Congress, starting in January, there is more that we can do and much that we can do better.

Currently more than 200,000 American service members are serving in harms way in Iraq and Afghanistan. We owe these brave men and women the tools and equipment they need to get the job done and get them home safely. They must be our priority.

Yet we must not allow our overseas commitments to let us lose focus on our priorities here at home. It is wrong for the United States to rebuild schools in Iraq at the same time that school construction in Georgia lacks funding. It is wrong to be spending \$2.1 billion on public safety programs in Iraq, while homeland security programs are being cut here at home. And it is wrong to ask our armed forces to risk their lives in Iraq, without keeping our commitment to them and other veterans when they return home. We must get our priorities straight.

As a nation we are facing some of the most critical challenges in our history: challenges to our military, to our security and to our very way of life. These are challenges that can not and must not be met along partisan lines, but rather we must put partisanship aside and work together on a bipartisan basis to formulate a course of action. The solutions to our problems are not Republican or Democratic, but American solutions. This has always been my goal as your Member of Congress.

This newsletter was prepared to give you a brief review of the issues that we have and will continue to address in Congress and at home. We hope that you find it informative and hope that you will take the time to contact our offices with your thoughts and concerns. It is only with your feedback and by working together that we will improve the quality of life for all of South Georgia.

Sincerely,

Sanford Bishop
Member of Congress

Homeland Security

Keeping Our Nation Safe

Keeping all Americans safe is one of a Member of Congress's most sacred responsibilities. That is why I was pleased that Congress passed major intelligence and homeland security measures in the 108th Congress.

First, Congress passed the 9/11 Recommendations Implementation Act, which implements the recommendations of the September 11 Commission. This landmark measure represents the most sweeping intelligence reform in decades, creating a new director of national intelligence to oversee all intelligence agencies, creates uniform security clearance protocol, temporarily permits the government to search and monitor "lone wolf terrorists" — individuals who act alone, rather than for foreign countries, authorizes at least 2,000 additional border security agents, provides additional border security and investigative resources, and establishes strict federal standards for state-issued drivers licenses and other forms of identification.

Additionally, as a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I was active in voting for and helping to secure \$33.1 billion to fund the Department of Homeland Security in fiscal year 2005. The measure increases funding by about 9 percent, and provides funding for the immigration entry-

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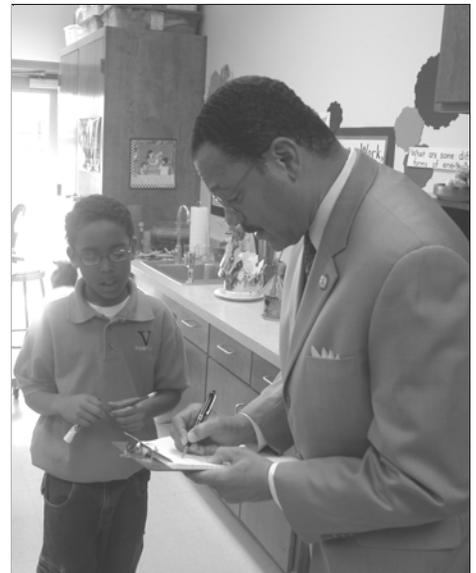
Battle Ahead

Strengthening Social Security

Social Security is among the most revolutionary and successful programs in our nation's history. Operating as both retirement security and social insurance, it has saved millions from poverty, reducing the number of seniors living at or below the poverty line from 50 percent at its inception to less than 10 percent today.

As we move into the new legislative year, the President and many in Congress are asking if Social Security is still a good deal for Americans. I believe the answer is yes. While pensions, personal savings and Social Security are all key components of a retirement portfolio—only Social Security provides a true safety net. Today, only 41 percent of retirees have an employee-sponsored pension and less than one in five low-income workers receive a pension. While 60 percent of retirees receive income from assets, the median retiree only receives about \$2000 annually. Social Security is clearly the cornerstone of retirement security for most Americans.

Critics of the program argue that Social Security is facing an immediate financial



FIGHTING FOR OUR CHILDREN--*Today children of Southwest Georgia have more teachers, smaller classes and better facilities. We have fought for after school programs to keep our children on a positive path and tax credits and educational savings plans to see them succeed in college. Yet we must do more. Three years ago, I joined my colleagues in an unprecedented bipartisan effort to pass the "No Child Left Behind" initiative; however this initiative has not received the full funding that it needs to succeed. This past March I visited with students at Valwood Christian Academy to discuss the importance of participating in government. (see picture above)*

crisis. This is not true. According to the Social Security actuaries, the trust funds currently carry enough reserves to pay benefits to all who are eligible through 2042, and at that time, the trust funds will still have enough in revenue to pay 73 to 81 percent of benefits.

Clearly steps should be taken to shore up this program and the sooner we do so the easier it will be; however proposals aiming to replace the current system with private accounts create concern. While privatization proponents claim that such a system would strengthen Social Security, the fear is that it may do just the opposite.

The president has suggested a plan put forth in 2001 by his Social Security commission that he calls a "good blueprint" for reform. Under this plan, one third of a worker's contributions to Social Security would be diverted from the trust funds into private accounts. Current projections show that as a result of this plan, the trust funds would lose almost \$2 trillion in the first 10 years alone. This would mean that the trust funds would only have enough money to

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Congress Approves Funds for 2nd District

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I have worked diligently to secure federal support for worthy projects and activities in the Second Congressional District.

I am currently a member of both the Military Construction Subcommittee, which is responsible for the funding of all military and defense installations worldwide, and the VA/HUD and Independent Agencies Subcommittee, which funds our veterans, housing, economic development environmental, space and science science programs.

This year we received literally hundreds of proposals and requests for funding for many worthy and important efforts. While we were not successful in securing funding for all of these requests, I am very pleased that this year's appropriations bills included support for many projects in our district, particularly in some of our smaller communities.

Following is a complete list of projects approved for FY05:

LABOR, HHS: \$2,450,000

- \$100,000 - Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital
- \$225,000 - Dougherty County Schools – “Helping to Involve Parents for Better Schools”
- \$300,000 - Georgia Project – Dalton County
- \$25,000 - Randolph County Board of Education
- \$350,000 - Albany State University/Darton College – Minority Male Initiative
- \$650,000 – Darton College – Rural technology network
- \$150,000 – Hospital Authority of Miller County
- \$250,000 – John Amos Cancer Center, Columbus
- \$400,000 - Valdosta State University/Valdosta – Health Care Facility

VA/HUD: \$5,920,000

- \$72,750 – SOWEGA Council on Aging – Albany
- \$72,750 – Lowndes Association of Ministries to People
- \$72,750 – East Baker Historical Society
- \$97,000 – Plains Rural Historical Resource Center
- \$97,000 – Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital
- \$97,000 – National Infantry Foundation, Columbus, GA
- \$97,000 – Flint River Auditorium Alliance
- \$97,000 – Albany Theater
- \$194,000 – Miller County Development Authority
- \$72,750 – America's Second Harvest, Thomasville
- \$900,000 – Albany, storm water infrastructure
- \$400,000 – Americus – sewer expansion
- \$1,000,000 – Columbus Water Works
- \$250,000 – Plains – Water/sewer
- \$100,000 - Thomasville sewer infrastructure
- \$150,000 – Moultrie wastewater
- \$750,000 – Moultrie water/wastewater
- \$150,000 – Coca Cola Space Ctr – Columbus
- \$400,000 – Albany State/Darton – Science, Engineering, Math
- \$250,000 – South GA Tech College – Science, Math, Engineering
- \$250,000 – Albany State – “Jump Start” - Math, Science for Pre College
- \$250,000 – Georgia Project/ABAC College
- \$100,000 - GA SW College – math, science

TRANSPORTATION: \$3,500,000

- \$1,000,000 - SW Georgia Airport - Runway extension project
- \$1,000,000 - Flint River Bridge
- \$1,000,000 - SWGA Regional Airport - Completion of the Terminal Arrival Radar
- \$500,000 - Moultrie, GA - Intermodal Facility

COMMERCE JUSTICE: \$1,070,000

- \$75,000 - Mitchell County: Youth Advocacy and Outreach Program
- \$150,000 - Dawson, GA – Youth advocacy and drug prevention
- \$150,000 - Thomasville: Thomas Area Teen Center
- \$200,000 - Columbus, GA - Teenage Parenting Center

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GROWING SOUTHWEST GEORGIA—With the more than 10 billion dollars in federal funds brought home over the last twelve years, we have paved roads, improved schools, built homes, hired police officers, improved health care and implemented community programs. Above, at a community event, I am meeting with representatives of the Columbus Housing Initiative and the Department of Housing and Urban Development to discuss private-public partnerships to expand home ownership opportunities.

Federal Money Making a Difference in Southwest Georgia

The Second Congressional District did extremely well this year in securing more than \$350 million in federal grants – by far the most money secured during my 12 years in Congress, which totals at least \$950 million to date.

We do it in part by providing our constituents and communities with up-to-date and comprehensive information on how and where to apply for funds and by tracking and supporting grant applications once funds have been applied for. Whether it's a new gymnasium for a local school, increasing first responder resources in a rural community, or emergency food and shelter funds, the Second Congressional District helps get it done.

For example, we helped the Ashburn Fire Department receive \$139,500 to replace its antiquated 1974 pumper with a new vehicle, bringing Ashburn into compliance with the Georgia Fire Fighters Standards and Training, Insurance Services Office, and NFPA. The grant was made through the enormously successful Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant program, administered by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Other successful grants include: a \$69,340 Rural Business Enterprise Grant to Seminole County; a \$117,303 Supportive Housing Grant to the First Monumental Faith Community Outreach program; a \$220,000 Upward Bound education grant to Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College; and a \$566,723 Head Start child development grant to the Randolph County Board of Education, and many others.

Helping Our Students Succeed

It is proven that children do better in school when their parents are involved. This fact has been the driving force behind HIP (Helping to Involve Parents for better schools), an organization devoted to getting parents involved and active in their children's education, and thanks to \$225,000 included in this year's Labor/Health and Human Services Appropriations bill, HIP is coming to Dougherty County Schools.

A pilot communications system—that if successful could be expanded to schools nationwide—HIP is an Internet and telephone based software system that will allow teachers to leave messages for parents and parents to leave messages for teachers. Homework will be posted on the system and parents can be notified if their child is getting in trouble or having difficulty in school. The system will allow teachers, parents, students and administrators to use the system 7 days a week 24 hours a day, which will allow parents to stay involved in a way that best suits their individual needs and schedules. As Brady Keys, Jr., Chairman and Co-Founder of the HIP system, states, “HIP levels the field for parents which gives them the comfort to use HIP often.”

We are looking forward to HIP being in use in Dougherty County and then hopefully throughout all of Georgia.

Honoring our Heroes Providing for our Military

We will never be able to fully repay the debt that we owe the brave men and women in uniform who willingly risk their lives in defense of our freedom. The least we can do is never stop trying!

This year's Defense Authorization Bill helps by ensuring that our service members in combat have the equipment they need to get the job done and keep them safe, while honoring our commitment to our veterans. Highlights of the bill include:

- **3.5 percent across-the-board pay raise for military personnel**
- **\$25 billion to support the Global War on Terror's operational costs, personnel expenses and equipment.**
- **Enhanced health care benefits for reservists and their family members.**
- **An end to the “disabled veterans tax” for retirees considered 100 percent disabled, as part of the 10-year phase in plan for concurrent receipt, these retirees will now receive both their full military retirement pay and their VA disability compensation.**
- **Increased funding to build and revitalize military housing.**

[Taking Care of Our Farm Families](#)

Tobacco Farmers Get Long Awaited Relief

Years of fighting on behalf of our tobacco growers paid off this year when we passed the "American Jobs Creation Act of 2004." The bill contained more than \$550 million for Georgia's tobacco farmers and ends the Depression-era quota system that has devalued farms by as much as 60 percent in recent years. The "buyout" also answers many tobacco critics by removing the federal government from the business of supplementing its growth.

I was a cosponsor of the "Fair and Equitable Tobacco Reform Act of 2004" which was included in the American Jobs Creation Act, a diverse, corporate tax bill designed to stimulate job growth (see story below). With bipartisan support from rural communities across the South, we were able to get this legislation passed. We are proud of the work that the farmers, farm groups, businesses and others did to help get this legislation pushed through Congress.

Fighting for Our Values

Traveling around our district, one is constantly inspired by the values that define our region: the steadfast commitment to family, the meaning of a hard day's work, devotion to God and a patriotic love of our country. These are the ideals that set our community apart and make me proud to call Southwest Georgia my home. These are also the values that I am fighting for in Congress.

This past year I cosponsored and voted in favor of an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would define marriage as a union between one man and one woman. This is the most responsible way to protect the traditional definition of marriage and while the amendment did not pass the House of Representatives.

I am also diligent in fighting to protect the Pledge of Allegiance from those who want to remove all references to a higher power from our public discourse. This is not reflective of us as a nation. This year I cosponsored the Pledge Protection Act of 2004, which sought to elevate our nation's pledge of allegiance from the jurisdiction of our court system. Activists should not be able to amend our nation's values.

I believe that students should be allowed to worship in schools and it is wrong to burn a flag. While we are a nation of many religions we are also a nation based on faith and I will continue to work for those values

[Government in Crisis](#)

Deficit Keeps Growing

This past November, for the third time in three years, the House of Representatives voted to increase the limit on the national debt—this time by a \$800 billion to a total \$8.18 trillion. The reason: the government is spending more money than it is taking in.. While drastic cuts to domestic spending have been made across the board, record amounts continue to be spent on the military action and reconstruction in Iraq. That, coupled with a slowed economy and generous tax cuts causes the budget deficit to keep growing.

This is irresponsible and members on both sides of the aisle are encouraging the reinstatement of the "pay as you go" rules that were in effect in the 1990's, when the federal budget was on its way to record budget surpluses.

"Pay as you go" means that before tax cuts or spending can be approved, they must be paid for. This is a common sense provision that each of us put in to practice when we balance our own checkbooks. Congress needs to be more responsible.

[Providing Real Relief](#)

Rx Keeping Drug Costs Down

As many of you know, last year Congress passed the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act. While this law will not fully go into full effect until January 2006, seniors have seen the first effects of this legislation in the form of a drug discount card program, which was introduced in May 2004. For some this program has provided a degree of relief, while for others it has fallen short.

As prescription drug costs continue to rise at a dramatic rate, it is clear that for a plan to provide real savings it must at its core address the price of prescription drugs. It does no good to provide seniors with additional money to purchase drugs, if drug companies just continue to raise their rates. Rather, we need to look at options that keep prices down. Unfortunately, the bill that passed last year fails to do this.

For example, the legislation which passed prevents the Secretary of Health and Human Services from negotiating with drug companies for lower prices on behalf of Medicare recipients. This is a practice currently in place at the Veterans Administration that is estimated to save veterans nearly 40 percent on prescription drug costs. It is also in practice in countries like Canada where some drugs are available at a fraction of the cost here at home. While such savings would clearly cut into drug company profits, if our goal is real prescription drug relief for our seniors, this provision must be reexamined.

We should also take another look at allowing Americans to import drugs from countries such as Canada. Of course, we must always put the safety of our consumers first; yet many of these drugs were actually manufactured in the United States.

The situation can be overwhelming, confusing and even frightening, as few things are as serious as our health and the health of our loved ones. Our goal is not to scare seniors, but rather to reexamine the issue so that we might provide the best relief possible. No one should ever be forced to choose between a meal and life saving medication.

If you have any questions or concerns about the drug discount card program or benefits that will be available through Medicare you may call 1-800-MEDICARE, www.medicare.gov, www.familiesusa.org or call one of our offices for assistance.

"The American Jobs Creation Act"

Passed at the end of the 108th Congress, "the American Jobs Creation Act" was drafted in response to a World Trade Organization ruling against U.S. export subsidies, but the legislation contains so much more for American business. Aside from the landmark tobacco buyout, long awaited by our farm communities, the bill attempts to close abusive tax shelters and loopholes for corporations, while working to help small businesses, manufacturers, foresters and even racetrack owners. Some of the bills highlights include:

- 3% tax reduction on domestic manufacturing
- Incentives for small businesses investment
- Repeal of the fuel excise tax
- Subsidies for fuel alternatives
- Reduction in restaurant depreciation.

[Tax Relief for Families](#)

Ending the Marriage Penalty

Tax time is difficult enough; yet for too long married couples have been punished by the U.S. Tax Code simply for being married. During the last year, we fought to correct this by permanently setting the standard deduction for married couples at twice that of single taxpayers, while increasing the 15% tax bracket for married couples to twice that for single taxpayers.

While these measures are not yet permanent, thanks to legislation passed this year, married couples filing jointly will have relief from the marriage penalty until 2010. Until then, we will continue the fight to see that these provisions become permanent.

COMING SOON

Congressman Bishop's E-Newsletter

For more information, visit:
www.house.gov/bishop

Recovering from Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne...

This summer, South Georgia experienced one of the worst hurricane seasons in history. Agricultural producers were among the worst affected by the high winds and heavy rains which caused incalculable devastation.

Federal assistance is crucial to alleviating the short and long-term impact that these storms will have on our family farmers, which is why we fought to guarantee that South Georgia would

receive its fair share of assistance. In October, as we worked to complete the Military Construction Appropriations bill, we recognized an opportunity to include \$11.6 billion to assist hurricane victims, including \$2.9 billion for national agriculture disaster assistance. For more information on disaster assistance contact one of our offices or www.FEMA.gov or www.gemainfo.gov.